

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 01065 01 OF 02 111512Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13
SSM-03 OMB-01 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 HA-05 /102 W
-----117477 111527Z /44

O 111448Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4078
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 01065

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR PBOR EG IS XF US
SUBJECT: SETTLEMENTS ISSUE CLOUDS ATMOSPHERE ON EVE NEW
- ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS

REF: CAIRO 00918

SUMMARY: SETTLEMENTS ISSUE LOOMS LARGE AS BILATERAL
MILITARY COMMITTEE MEETING OPENS LATER TODAY AND PREPARA-
TIONS CONTINUE FOR POLITICAL COMMITTEE
MEETING IN JERUSALEM. MEDIA STRESSING EGYPT WILL REQUIRE
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 01065 01 OF 02 111512Z

WITHDRAWAL OF ALL SETTLEMENTS ALTHOUGH SADAT CONTINUING
AVOID PUBLIC DEBATE WITH BEGIN. EGYPTIANS, INCLUDING
MEMBERS NEGOTIATING TEAM, INCREASINGLY FEARFUL THAT WILL
FOR SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS DOES NOT EXIST ON ISRAELI
SIDE TO SAME EXTENT AS EGYPTIAN SIDE. THEY BELIEVE
BEGIN STRONG ENOUGH TO GO CONSIDERABLY FURTHER FASTER
AND SUSPECT HE PLAYING FOR TIME IN ORDER ACHIEVE SEPARATE

PEACE AND KEEP THE WEST BANK. U.S. ROLE SEEN AS CRUCIAL
IN RESOLVING SETTLEMENTS ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

1. MILITARY COMMITTEE. BILATERAL MILITARY COMMITTEE
. TO BEGIN ITS WORK AT 1800 MONDAY, JANUARY 11. PRESS PRO-
CLAIMS "DISMANTLING ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS FIRST ITEM ON
AGENDA" AND ALL ASPECTS OF WITHDRAWAL TO BE DISCUSSED.
EACH SIDE HAS ITS OWN PLAN FOR WITHDRAWAL, PRESS NOTES,
AND EGYPT'S INCLUDES EARLY WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL OF SINAI,
AND ELIMINATION OF ALL MILITARY AND CIVILIAN INSTALLATIONS.
ISRAELI NEGOTIATING TEAM, PRECEDED BY 25 TECHNICIANS WHO
ARRIVED JANUARY 10, EXPECTED AT 1100 ALONG WITH SOME 50
ISRAELI JOURNALISTS. MAJ. GEN. HASSAN AHMED ELKATEB
DESIGNATED SPOKESMAN FOR EGYPTIAN SIDE AND WILL MEET WITH
PRESS AFTER EACH DAY'S SESSION.

2. POLITICAL COMMITTEE. PREPARATIONS CONTINUING FOR
OPENING JANUARY 15 (SIC) OF POLITICAL COMMITTEE IN JERU-
SALEM. AGENDA, PRESS REPORTS REITERATE, CONSISTS OF
TOTAL WITHDRAWAL, PALESTINIAN QUESTION ("WHICH INCLUDES
SELF-DETERMINATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF INDEPENDENT
STATE") AND PEACE ARRANGEMENTS AFTER WITHDRAWAL. ALL
PAPERS FEATURED MEETING BETWEEN FORMIN KAMEL AND AMBASSA-
DOR EILTS JANUARY 10 ON PREPARATIONS FOR JERUSALEM. SADAT
HELD "EXTREMELY IMPORTANT" MEETING WITH MUBARAK AND SALIM
TO ISSUE DIRECTIVES IN LIGHT OF HIS RECENT INTERNATIONAL
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PAGE 03 CAIRO 01065 01 OF 02 111512Z

CONTACTS. DAYAN QUOTED PROMINENTLY THAT HE EXPECTS TALKS
TO LAST TWO MONTHS.

3. SETTLEMENTS. SETTLEMENTS QUESTION HAS BECOME MAJOR
EGYPTIAN PREOCCUPATION. IN PRESS CONFERENCE WITH SHAH,
SADAT SAID HE DID NOT WISH TO ENGAGE IN VERBAL BATTLE ON
SETTLEMENTS ISSUE BUT BELIEVED ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS
POLICY INCOMPATIBLE WITH PEACE EFFORTS. PEOPLE'S
ASSEMBLY FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE MET URGENTLY JANUARY
10 AND ISSUED STATEMENT THAT EXECUTION ISRAELI SETTLEMENT
POLICY "AT THIS DELICATE STAGE, BOUND TO CREATE HARMFUL
SITUATION, OBSTRUCT PROGRESS OF TALKS AND THREATEN EFFORTS
TO ESTABLISH PEACE." STRESSED NECESSITY OF ELIMINATING
ALL SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. EDITORIAL
COMMENT UNIFORMLY CALLED ON ISRAEL TO RISE TO OCCASION
BY RESPONDING SUITABLY TO SADAT'S INITIATIVES, CLAIMED
EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY IN SINAI UNQUESTIONABLE, AND BLAMED
ISRAEL FOR PLACING OBSTACLES IN ROAD TO PEACE. CAIRO
RADIO BROADCAST JANUARY 10 SUMMED UP EGYPTIAN VIEWS ON
SETTLEMENTS BY STATING EGYPTIAN POSITION "TOTALLY BASED
ON INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMACY, UN RESOLUTIONS, AND RECOG-
NIZED PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW." AND "IT IS

GREAT MISTAKE FOR ISRAELI OFFICIALS TO IMAGINE THAT
EGYPTIAN PEOPLE CAN POSSIBLY ACCEPT A SETTLEMENT WHICH
WOULD UNDERMINE EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY IN ANY WAY . . . AS
WORLD KNOWS VERY WELL, EGYPT HAS DONE FOR SAKE OF JUST
PEACE LAST THING ANY STATE CAN DO. THERE IS NOTHING
ELSE EGYPT CAN GIVE FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.
THE SITUATION, IN THE END, DEPENDS ON ISRAEL AND THE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 01065

DEGREE OF ITS REAL DESIRE AND SINCERITY OF ITS INTENTIONS."

4. U.S. VIEW. HODDING CARTER REPORTED AS SAYING U.S. IN
PAST HAS DESCRIBED ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS AS ILLEGAL AND
OBSTACLES TO PEACE. QUOTED THAT U.S. HAS NOT BACKED OFF
ITS POSITION ON SETTLEMENTS AND U.S. BELIEVES ISSUE CAN
BE SOLVED THROUGH EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DISCUSSIONS. ACCORD-
ING "OBSERVERS", THERE NOW INDICATIONS U.S. PREPARING
TAKE TOUGH STAND AT JERUSALEM AND DIFFERENCES WITH ISRAEL

EXPECTED BECOME VISIBLE.

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 01065 02 OF 02 111512Z

5. SELF-DETERMINATION. PALESTINIAN QUESTION ALSO TREATED PROMINENTLY. AHRAH REPORTED FROM WASHINGTON "DEPARTMENT CIRCLES" SAY SECRETARY VANCE WILL CONCENTRATE AT JERUSALEM ON FORMULA FOR SELF-DETERMINATION ACCEPTABLE TO ALL. DEPARTMENT LEGAL EXPERTS, ACCORDING AHRAH, HAVE ALREADY DRAFTED SUCH FORMULA AND VANCE WILL DISCUSS IT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND BRZEZINSKI BEFORE LEAVING FOR JERUSALEM.

6. COMMENT. SETTLEMENTS ISSUE IS CAUSING CONCERN AND APPREHENSION EVEN AMONG MEMBERS EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATING TEAM. WHILE THEY STILL HOLDING TO THEORY THAT IRREVERSIBLE DIALOGUE UNDERWAY, THEY ARE INCREASINGLY FEARFUL THAT GOOD FAITH AND REAL DESIRE FOR SUCCESS DO NOT EXIST ON ISRAELI SIDE. WHILE A FEW RECOGNIZE THAT SUNDAY'S CABINET DECISION ALSO WAS PUT-DOWN OF SHARON'S MORE AMBITIOUS PLANS, THEY BELIEVE BEGIN IS STRONG ENOUGH TO GO CONSIDERABLY FURTHER FASTER. THEY SUSPECT, THEREFORE, THAT HE IS NOT USING TIME TO BRING ABOUT TRANSFORMATION IN ISRAELI THINKING, BUT RATHER PLAYING FOR TIME IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A SEPARATE PEACE AND KEEP THE WEST BANK.

7. U.S. ROLE. EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS PROFESS TO SEE ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY AS OUTRIGHT DEFIANCE OF U.S. THEY ARGUE U.S. MUST NOW BACK UP ITS PUBLICLY STATED POSITION THAT SETTLEMENTS ILLEGAL AND OBSTACLE TO PEACE WITH CONCRETE ACTIONS OR PEACE PROCESS WILL FAIL. IN SHORT, SETTLEMENTS ISSUE NOW SEEN HERE AS YARDSTICK OF ISRAELI INTENTIONS AND ACID TEST OF U.S. CREDIBILITY. EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LAND SETTLEMENT, PEACE TALKS, NEGOTIATIONS, MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CAIRO01065
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780016-0620
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780177/aaaacncq.tel
Line Count: 208
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f094eae4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 CAIRO 918
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3795478
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SETTLEMENTS ISSUE CLOUDS ATMOSPHERE ON EVE NEW - ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS
TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, EG, IS, XF, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f094eae4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014